Australian Bureau of Statistics

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Australia makes progress in health, education and work but productivity lags

Australians have a higher income, an increased life expectancy and are better educated compared with a decade ago, but. the number of threatened plants and animals has increased over the last ten years.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics today updated Measures of Australia's Progress (MAP), a collection of key indicators that helps to answer the question 'Is life in Australia getting better?'.

Figures released today show that life expectancy in Australia has increased over the last decade. A girl born in 2010 can expect to reach 84 years of age while a boy can expect to live to 79.5 years. Just over half of all Australians think their health is excellent or very good.

ABS Director of Social and Progress Reporting, Sue Taylor said the latest MAP release also found that education and employment are improving.

“In 2011, 64 per cent of 25 to 64 years olds held a vocational or higher education qualification compared to 53 per cent in 2001," Ms Taylor said. “The annual average unemployment rate declined from 6.8 per cent to 5.1 per cent between 2001 and 2011 and the average household weekly income of low and middle income households rose between 2000 and 2010,” she said.

However, it is not all good news; the latest MAP update also shows both productivity and environmental indicators have declined.

“Our most recent productivity cycle showed a negative growth of -0.8 per cent." Ms Taylor said.

“The ABS also found that the number of threatened plants and animals has increased over this time, as did total net greenhouse gas emissions."

“Today’s figures show Australia is doing well in areas of the economy and society, but there are some areas where we’ve regressed." Ms Taylor added.

For more information on these changes over time, and other important areas of life in Australia, please see *Measures of Australia’s Progress: Summary Indicators, 2012* and check out our latest podcast at www.abs.gov.au/about/progress.

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